

The whiche she shredde and seeth for hir lyvyng,
And made hir bed ful harde and nothing softe;
And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on lofte
With everich obeisaunce and diligence
That child may doon to fadres reverence.

WHON Grisilde, this povre creature,
ful ofte sithe this markys sette his eye
As he on hunting rood paraventure;
And whan it fil that he myghte hire espye,
He noght with wantowne looking of folye
His eyen caste on hire, but in sad wyse
Upon hir chiere he gan hym ofte avyse,

Commendynge in his herte hir wommanhede,
And eek hir vertu, passynge any wight
Of so yong age, as wel in chiere as dede.
for thogh the peple hadde no greet insight
In vertu, he considered ful right
Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde
Wedde hire oonly, if evere he wedde sholde.

THE day of wedding cam, but no wight kan
Telle what womman that it sholde be;
for which mervelle wondred many a man,
And seyden, whan they were in privetee,
Wol nat oure lord yet leve his vanytee?
Wol he nat wedde? allas! allas! the while!
Why wole he thus hymself and us bigile?

But natheles this markys hath doon make
Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
Brooches and rynges, for Grisildis sake;
And of hir clothyng took he the mesure
By a mayden ylyke to hir stature,
And eek of othere ornementes alle
That unto swich a wedding sholde falle.

THE time of undren of the same day
Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be;
And al the paleys put was in array,
Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree;
Houses of office stuffed with plentee,
Ther maystow seen of deyntrous vitaille
That may be found, as fer as last Vitaille.

This roial markys, richely arrayed,
Lordes and ladyes in his compaignye,
The whiche that to the feeste were yprayed,
And of his retenue the bachelrye,
With many a soun of sondry melodye,
Unto the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte way han holde.

GRISILDE of this, God woot, ful innocent
That for hire shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as soone as ever she may.
for wel she hadde herd seyde, that thilke day
The markys sholde wedde, and, if she myghte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.

She thoghte, I wole with othere maydens stonde,
That been my felawes, in oure dore, and se

The markysesse, and therfore wol I fonde
To doon at hoom, as soone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me;
And thanne I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey unto the castel holde.

AND as she wolde over hir thresshold gon
The markys cam, and gan hire for to calle;
And she set down hir water pot anon
Beside the thresshold, in an oxes stalle,
And down upon hir knes she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.

This thoughtful markys spak unto this mayde
ful sobrelly, and seyde in this manere:
Where is youre fader, Grisildis? he sayde;
And she with reverence, in humble cheere,
Answerde, Lord, he is al redy heere.
And in she gooth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markys she hir fader fette.

By the hand thanne took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he hym hadde asyde,
Janicula, I neither may ne kan
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde.
If that thou vouchesauf, whatso bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,
As for my wyf, unto hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man ybore;
And al that liketh me, I dar wel seyn,
It liketh thee, and specially therfore,
Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore,
If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe,
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe?

This sodeyn cas this man astonyed so,
That reed he wex, abayst, and al quakyng
He stood; unnethe seyde he wordes mo,
But oonly thus: Lord, quod he, my wyllyng
Is as ye wole, ne ayeins youre likyng
I wol nothing; ye be my lord so deere;
Right as yow lust governeth this mateere.

Yet wol I, quod this markys softely,
That in thy chambre I and thou and she
Have a collacioun, and wostow why?
for I wol axe if it hire wille be
To be my wyf, and reule hire after me;
And al this shal be doon in thy presence,
I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.

AND in the chambre whil they were aboute
Hir tretys, which as ye shal after heere,
The peple cam unto the hous withoute,
And wondred hem in how honeste manere,
And tentify, she kepte hir fader deere.
But outrely Grisildis wondre myghte,
for nevere erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
To seen so greet a gest come in that place;

She nevere was to swiche gestes woned,
for which she looked with ful pale face.
But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
Thise am the wordes that the markys sayde
To this benigne verray feithful mayde:

Grisilde, he seyde, ye shal wel understonde
It liketh to youre fader and to me
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,
As I suppose ye wol that it so be;
But thise demandes axe I first, quod he,
That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse?

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
To al my lust, and that I frely may,
As me best thynketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
And nevere ye to grucche it, nyght ne day?
And eek whan I sey Ye, ne sey nat Nay,
And eek whan I sey Ye, ne sey nat Nay,
Neither by word ne frownyng contenance;
Swere this, and heere I swere oure alliance.

WONDRYNGE upon this word, quak-
yng for drede,
She seyde, Lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me beede;
But as ye wole yourself, right so wol I.
And heere I swere that nevere wyllyngly
In werk ne thought I nyl yow disobeye,
for to be deed, though me were looth to deye.

This is ynogh, Grisilde myn, quod he,
And forth he gooth with a ful sobre cheere
Out at the dore, and after that cam she,
And to the peple he seyde in this manere,
This is my wyf, quod he, that standeth heere;
Honoureth hire, and loveth hire, I preye,
Whoso me loveth; ther is namore to seye.

And for that nothing of hir olde geere
She sholde brynge into his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoillen hire right there;
Of which thise ladyes weren nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wherinne she was clad;
But natheles this mayde, bright of hewe,
fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heris han they kembd, that lay untressed
ful rudely, and with hir fyngres smale
A corone on hire heed they han ydressed,
And sette hire ful of nowches grete and smale.
Of hire array what sholde I make a tale?
Unnethe the peple hire knew for hire fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.

This markys hath hir spoused with a ryng
Brought for the same cause, and thanne hire
sette
Upon an hors, snow/whit and wel amblyng,
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
With joyful peple that hire ladde and mette,
Conveyed hire, and thus the day they spende
In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

And, shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I seye that to this newe markysesse
God hath swich favour sent hire of his grace,
That it ne semed nat by likynesse
That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote, or in an oxen stalle,
But norissed in an emperoures halle.

To every wight she woxen is so deere
And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore
And from hire birthe knewe hire year by yeere,
Unnethe trowed they, but dorste han swore
That to Janicle, of which I spak bifore,
She doghter nas, for, as by conjecture,
hem thoughte she was another creature.

for thogh that evere vertuous was she,
She was encressed in swich excellence
Of thewes goode, yset in heigh bountee,
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benigne, and so digne of reverence,
And koude so the peples herte embrace,
That ech hire lovede that looked on hir face.

Noght oonly of Saluces in the toun
Publiced was the bountee of hir name,
But eek beside in many a regioun,
If oon seide wel, another seyde the same.
So spradde of hire heighe bountee the fame,
That men and wommen, as wel yonge as olde,
Goon to Saluce, upon hir to biholde.

Thus Walter lowely, nay, but roially,
Wedded with fortunat honestete,
In Goddes pees lyveth ful esily
At hoom, and outward grace ynogh had he;
And for he saugh that under lowe degree
Was ofte vertu hid, the peple hym heelde
A prudent man, and that is seyn ful seelde.

Nat oonly this Grisildis thurgh hir wit
Koude al the feet of wyfly homlynesse,
But eek, whan that the cas required it,
The commune profit koude she redresse.
Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevynesse,
In al that land, that she ne koude aperse,
And wisely brynge hem alle in reste and ese.

Though that hire housbonde absent were anon,
If gentil men, or othere of hire contree
Were wrothe, she wolde bryngen hem aton;
So wise and rype wordes hadde she,
And juggements of so greet equitee,
That she from hevne sent was, as men wende,
Peple to save and every wrong tamende.

At longe tyme after that this Grisild
Was wedded, she a doghter hath ybore,
Al had hire levere have born a knave child.
Glad was this markys and the folk therfore;
for though a mayde child coome al bifore,
She may unto a knave child atteyne
By liklihed, syn she nys nat bareyne.

Explicit secunda pars.

